

REMARKS

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Befumo for the interview on August 19, 2003. As agreed in the interview, Applicants have ensured that all previously rejected independent claims state that the bond site has an aspect ratio of greater than about 3. Additionally, a declaration showing the criticality of the aspect ratio is included.

Claims 1 and 11 have been amended and new Claim 26 has been added to clarify that the aspect ratio is 3. Support for the amendment is found at page 14, lines 17-19. New Claims 23-25 have been added to describe the width of the bond site. Support for these claims is found at page 14, lines 4-6.

Claims 9-10, 16, and 21-22 have been withdrawn as a result of an earlier restriction requirement.

Claims 1-8, 11-15, 17-20, and 23-26 are pending in the present application. It is believed that the amendments to the specification, claims, and drawings, and the new claims do not involve any introduction of new matter. Consequently, entry of these changes is believed to be in order and is respectfully requested.

Restriction Requirement

The Examiner has required restriction as to Claims 1-8, 11-15, and 17-20 (Group I); Claims 9, 10, 16, and 21 (Group II), and Claim 22 (Group III), because the inventions are distinct. For the purpose of compliance with the election request and to expedite prosecution, Applicants elect, with traverse, Group I, encompassing Claims 1-8, 11-15, and 17-20. Applicants assert that the generic claims will be allowable thereby eliminating the restriction requirement.

Drawings

Applicants are submitting amended drawings showing proposed drawing corrections to the reference characters 2A, 4A, and 9A objected to by the Examiner. The Examiner has objected to the use of different references characters to designate the top outer layer, bottom outer layer, bond sites, apertures, void region, film layer, and laminate. Applicants assert that different references characters are used to aid in clarity to the reader. The same element is given a different reference character only when it is shown in a different embodiment. Applicants want to ensure that the reader recognizes that a different embodiment is being shown. Additionally, similar reference characters, such as 2, 20, and 120, have been chosen when the same element is referenced to aid in clarity for the reader.

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Applicants are also submitting amended drawings showing correction to Figs. 10 and 11 to be consistent with the specification. Reference character 104 has been changed to reference character 105 to designate the lower supply roll. Reference character 180 has been removed from the Figs. 10 and 11 as it is not mentioned in the description and not necessary to describe the present invention.

Rejection Under 35 USC 103

The Examiner states that Claims 1, 2, 4, and 6 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Srinivasan, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,851,935) and over Middlesworth, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,537,930). As discussed with the Examiner, neither of the above-cited references discloses an aspect ratio of greater than about 3. As stated and shown in the attached declaration, the aspect ratio is critical to the claimed laminate web. When the aspect ratio of the bond sites is greater than about 3, the apertures are consistently and uniformly formed at the bond sites. This is shown by the Applicant in the attached declaration.

The attached declaration and remarks have shown that the claimed aspect ratio critically changes the structure of the laminate and that the laminate with an aspect ratio of greater than 3 is patentably distinct from the prior art articles. The claimed aspect ratio is critical to the function of the article and is not taught or disclosed in the prior art. Therefore, one having ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to develop the present invention based on the prior art.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants sincerely thank the Examiner for allowing Claims 11-15 and 17-20.

Conclusion

In light of the above remarks, it is requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection under 35 USC 103(a). Early and favorable action in the case is respectfully requested.

Applicants have made an earnest effort to place their application in proper form and to distinguish the invention as now claimed from the applied references. In view of the foregoing,

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Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, entry of the amendments presented herein, and allowance of Claims 1-8, 11-15, 17-20, and 23-26.

Respectfully submitted,

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